



**Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council**  
Meeting Notice

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD:

**May 10, 2011**

**10:00 AM**

**RI Department of Labor and Training**

1511 Pontiac Avenue  
Building 73, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, Pastore Complex  
Cranston, Rhode Island

**AGENDA**

**I. Call to Order/ Attendance—Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts**

Lt. Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts  
General Robert T. Bray  
Director J. David Smith  
Edward Johnson  
Peter Gaynor  
Dawn Lewis  
Gregory Scungio  
Terrence Gray  
David Vallee  
David Chopy  
James Ball  
Rachel Calabro  
Michael Roles  
Emily Pysh  
Michelle Burnett  
Jim Gumbley  
Jeff Stevens  
Paul Stasiuk  
James Lanni  
Suzanne Blake  
Charlotte Koestler  
Jane Austin  
Erin Lambie  
Joseph Arsenault

Brock Long  
Matthew Hochstein  
Susan Early  
Steven Florio  
Donna Longo Dimichelle  
Claudia Staniszewski  
Pamela Martinez  
Vladimir Ibarra

### **Approval of Minutes from April 12, 2011**

The minutes from the April 12, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved.

## **II. Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) Update**

### **Robert T. Bray, Adjutant General of Rhode Island**

The chair recalled and recognized the five years of collaborative work with General Bray including many deployments and provided him with a citation in recognition of his outstanding efforts and contributions to improving the lives of Rhode Islanders and his dedicated service on the Emergency Management Advisory Council.

General Bray thanked all of the present agencies for serving the state. He specially thanked the Lt. Governor and asked for her continued support in ensuring that funds continue as budget cuts are imminent. General Bray thanked all of the individuals at RI EMA and the Rhode Island National Guard for their high dedication and late work hours.

### **J. David Smith, Executive Director RI EMA**

The chair recognized Director Smith. Director Smith introduced Mr. Brock Long, former director of Alabama Emergency Management Agency, and Ms. Suzanne Blake and Charlotte Koestler from Mississippi to promote a Rhode Island Business Emergency Operations Center (RIBEOC) project.

Ms. Blake asked the members for their support on creating Rhode Island's first emergency operations center dedicated to disaster response and recovery of businesses. The project aims at reaching out to businesses to improve their disaster/crisis preparedness, improve communications and develop plans to help businesses return to normal as quickly as possible. Ms. Koestler stated that if the council helps businesses prepare, the wheels will then continue to run smoothly. An electronic draft letter of support was asked to be distributed to the membership at large to be sent back on the company/agency's letterhead. For further questions about the RIBEOC please contact Director Smith.

### **III. A Look Back on the Devastating Floods of March 2010 in Rhode Island**

**David R. Vallee, Hydrologist-in Charge, NOAA/NWS/Northeast River**

**Forecast Center**

The chair recognized David Vallee. Mr. Vallee gave an illustration of what happened in last year's flood. Mr. Vallee stated that last year's flood was not caused by a single coastal storm, snowmelt or improper water management, but by the atmospheric river, the blocking high pressure over Greenland. Mr. Vallee informed the membership that there was a sequence of heavy rainfall events over five weeks.

Mr. Vallee spoke about Rhode Island's main rivers response and historical facts that lead to the conclusion that there are climate changes. He stated that Rhode Island is getting wetter and warmer. Mr. Vallee informed the council that there were impacts on floodplains, land use, infrastructure, bridge clearances, property values, etc. He also suggested the council work on increasing the public's participation on flood insurance.

Mr. Vallee concluded by saying that in terms of planning, the state has adopted a new storm manual which will incorporate the new data that accounts for precipitation for the future. The council had no further concerns.

For further inquiries about the presentation Mr. Vallee can be reached via email at [david.vallee@noaa.gov](mailto:david.vallee@noaa.gov).

**David E. Choppy, Chief of Office of Compliance and Inspection, Rhode Island**

**Department of Environmental Management**

The chair recognized David Choppy. Mr. Choppy gave a brief update of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) routine and safety program. He stated that Rhode Island has 671 regulated dams, which are very old. Mr. Choppy informed the council that over the past four years DEM has received fund from FEMA to support their program. The agency conducted a survey in which all the dams are accounted for. Out of those dams 150 are damaged. He stated that after the flood, they were able to inspect 93 of the damaged dams. There were four to six dams that failed. These dams were not inspected.

Mr. Choppy informed the council that for this particular storm, the state paid \$1.3 million to repair the dams alone, not including inspection costs. He stated that when a bigger storm comes and these dams are not fixed, there will be many others ruined. He also informed the council that 47% of 130 dams are unsafe; by 2020 about 80 dams will be unsafe.

Mr. Choppy listed six improvements that would enhance the agency's role:

1. Need to include funding to repair "orphan dams (46-130)/privately owned"
2. Emphasize on public education

3. Analysis done on all dams to assess capacity and find out where the bodies can be lowered and prevent and mitigate the flooding,
4. Foster more cooperation from government officials
5. Another full-time staff to work with this program
6. Clarify the authority who ultimately makes decisions (policy discussion)

#### **IV. New Business, Member Comments, Suggestions**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 A.M. at the RI Department of Labor and Training.